



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 November 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
10 NOVEMBER 1967

1. South Vietnam

The new cabinet appears to be a competent one. Of the 17 ministers named, nine have served in the previous government. All key posts--defense, interior, revolutionary development, foreign affairs, and economy--are held either by generals or those who served in the Ky government.

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2. Hong Kong

The police--the prime targets--are finding it hard to control terrorist violence by militant Communists. They are particularly handicapped by the more powerful bombs now being used and by the difficulty of identifying hit-and-run bombers.

Moderate Communist leaders, who still seem committed to their long-term strategy of wearing down the British through political action, will probably try to keep the terrorists under some control. Peking, for its part, apparently wants to protect its economic interests in the colony.

3. Israel

US defense attachés who visited the Suez Canal area this week say the Israelis are really dug in. Their positions have been hardened with extensive revetments; additional water pipelines are being constructed, and they appear ready to stay until the Arabs agree to negotiate.

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4. Congo

The mercenary invasion of Katanga has fizzled out. In Rwanda, President Kayibanda, expecting at any moment a formal Congolese request to extradite Schramme and his group, is begging the Red Cross to evacuate them--just anywhere, but fast.

5. Communist China

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6. Cuba

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7. Panama

The squabbling over the presidential nomination within Robles' divided coalition is getting worse. The president has backed off from his first selection and suggested a compromise candidate. His proposal has infuriated powerful National Guard Commandant Vallarino, who expected to be the compromise candidate himself.

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Robles may end up by having to endorse Vallarino, a staunch member of the oligarchy.

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8. Ghana

The ruling junta may soon have to do something about one of its more influential, but impetuous, members. In a speech at the crowning of Miss Ghana, he criticized the qualifications of the contestants, intimating that his grandmother could have won over this collection. The papers quoted him as saying, "For Christ's sake, don't send any of them to London" for the Miss World contest.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Ho Misses Celebration: Ho Chi Minh played no role in the rather elaborate Hanoi ceremonies surrounding the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. His only contribution to the occasion was to write a bland article on the revolution for the Soviet party paper. Given the importance the Communists have attached to this anniversary, Ho's absence from the festivities is unusual and suggests that illness may have prevented him from attending.

There was no reference to Ho during the festivities. At meetings and receptions where he would normally play the key role as head of state or perhaps more importantly as a living link with the period of the revolution, his position was filled by the insignificant and aged Vice President Ton Duc Thanh. Further evidence of Hanoi's reluctance to associate Ho with the anniversary is the failure to give any public notice to his receiving the Order of Lenin from the Soviets. Presentation of the same award to Ton Duc Thanh was publicized.

During the past several months, Ho has been reported to be in poor health and resting outside of Hanoi. His erratic pattern of appearances in the past nine months has also suggested that he is ailing. He has made only three public appearances in recent months--the latest at North Vietnam's national day on 1 September.

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(He is

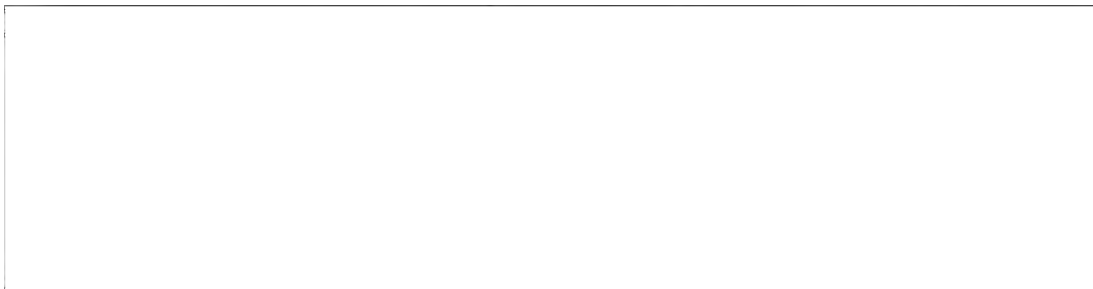
77.)

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Despite Ho's inactivity and his apparent aloofness from the political scene, there has been no indication in the past year that his subordinates have had any difficulty in running the country without his immediate leadership and direction. The evidence also suggests that the regime's major policies--particularly on strategy for the war and on possible peace negotiations--are the result of collective decision-making and are not dependent on Ho's presence.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Antiwar Activities in US: A Hanoi Vietnamese language broadcast of 8 November reports that a group of writers and journalists have signed a statement expressing their determination not to pay 23 percent of their taxes as a protest against the war. The statement reportedly urges the American people to join in refusing to pay their taxes. The broadcast also notes that a group of professors at Iowa University has issued a statement urging the US to end the "aggressive war" in Vietnam. Hanoi quotes the Toronto Star as revealing that about 75 American soldiers have deserted to Canada and that about 6,000 Americans have sought refuge from the draft in Canada.

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"War Crimes" Trial: The second session of the Bertrand Russell "War Crimes" tribunal will be held from 20-29 November in Roskilde, Denmark, a suburb of Copenhagen. The tribunal held its first session in Stockholm earlier this year.

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